

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

February 18, 2000
Resources Building
Sacramento, California

Action Team Report

Dale Hoffman-Floerke gave a report on the latest Action Team activities. Draft Resolution 99-9, proposed by the Reclamation Board, is not yet finalized. Existing guidelines still need to be clarified for vegetation, fences, and wetlands. The Reclamation Board will consider SJRMP Action Team input provided at the last meeting. The workshop to develop the SJRMP goals and objectives, was put on hold until more information is obtained about budget change proposals for the coming fiscal year. The group also agreed that it would be best to utilize an outside facilitator to help in the process. Alex Hildebrand requested SJRMP endorsement for a sediment removal project on the mainstem of the San Joaquin River which is very similar to an action item listed on pages 50 and 51 of the San Joaquin River Management Plan. The next action team meeting is on March 21, 2000 at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Building in Modesto.

Sacramento/San Joaquin River Comprehensive Plan Status

Steve Yaeger provided an update on the Sacramento/San Joaquin River Comprehensive Plan. Hydraulic models for the San Joaquin River, from Friant Dam to Vernalis, are calibrated. Scenario modeling is next to show the effects of any future actions. Aerial flights to facilitate mapping of the 500 year floodplain are currently in progress. They are also looking for partners to assist in reducing data and producing maps. The data will be entered into a database to produce contour maps at 2-foot intervals with 1-foot accuracy.

San Joaquin River Basin Watershed Conference

Kevin Faulkenberry gave a report on the watershed conference, held February 7-11 at the CSU Stanislaus campus in Turlock. Bill Loudermilk, Department of Fish and Game, provided the initial welcome and introduced the keynote speaker, Mary Nichols, Secretary for Resources. The class had 85 attendees from State, local and federal agencies, and local landowners. The course was well received by attendees with most of the speakers rating high on the course evaluations. A similar conference is in the planning stages to be held January 22-26, 2001 at CSU Fresno.

Additional 1-2 day courses are planned to focus on advanced watershed topics.

Firebaugh-Mendota Corridor Evaluation

Pablo Arroyave updated the group on the current activities of the San Joaquin Riparian Restoration Program. Arroyave passed out three handouts focusing on Firebaugh to Mendota Dam Corridor. The project is an attempt to restore a reach of the San Joaquin River from Firebaugh to Mendota. Objectives are to maintain and protect riparian resources, water supply, flood protection, agricultural operations, recreation, environmental education, and historical resources. This voluntary riparian restoration program is currently without a grassroots structure and has not yet attracted landowner participation. Landowners support is limited due to perception that they will lose their land to the government or a trail will be built across their property. Clarification of project objectives is expected to reduce these fears and encourage participation. A public outreach program was developed to clarify the plan's objectives and involve local stakeholders. To initiate public participation, "River Clean-up Days" were started to involve the landowners as well as the community.

West Bear Creek Project Status

Scott Fraser gave a presentation regarding the status of West Bear Creek Project (San Luis National Wildlife Refuge). The project was recommended in the 1995 SJRMP report on pages 102 and 103. Project benefits include a dual-purpose floodway and wildlife refuge habitat that includes 4,000 acres of San Joaquin River floodplain. The project is an example of a non-structural alternative to flood protection, which would allow flood water to inundate refuge lands during high flows improving wetlands and reducing flood peak. Fraser stated that the project benefits have been quantified in a recent study paid for by CALFED and now it is time to implement the project. The project would require agency support that the service would not be able to provide alone.

Salinity and Boron in the Lower SJR

Harley Davis provided information on the development of TMDLs for salinity and boron in the lower San Joaquin River. An upcoming workshop, "Salinity and Boron Issues in the San Joaquin" will be held on April 28, 2000 in Fresno. Workshop highlights include: water quality objectives, total maximum daily loads, real time water management, the release of salt at high flows, and the San Louis Drain.

The Resources Agency Perspective

Tim Ramirez agreed to perform the duties of the SJRMP Advisory Council Chair until a replacement for Ray Hart is found. Ramirez recommended the selection of a non-governmental Advisory Council Chair to lead SJRMP forward. It was expected that a non-governmental candidate would help to involve local stakeholders, landowners, small groups, agricultural interests, and the water district representatives to participate in the SJRMP process.

Date of next meeting: May 12, 2000.

Attendees
San Joaquin River Management Program
Advisory Council

February 18, 2000

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